

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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FOR WASHINGTON ACTION STAFF

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, EC

SUBJECT: COMMERCIAL TASK FORCE (CTF) MEETING, AUGUST 20

REF: STATE 074812

1. SUMMARY: QUITO ELEMENT OF COMMERCIAL TASK FORCE TRAVELLED GUAYAQUIL AUGUST 19 AND 20 TO ACQUAINT THEMSELVES AS A GROUP WITH MAJOR PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES IN THAT AREA. AMBASSADOR, DCM AND EIGHT QUITO MEMBERS CTF PARTICIPATED. IN ADDITION TO THE MONTHLY CTF MEETING, WHICH WAS HELD AT THE CONGEN, VARIOUS OUTSIDE VISITS AND BRIEFINGS WERE ARRANGED. END SUMMARY.

2. THE CTF MEMBERS BEGAN WITH A VISIT TO THE PORT OF GUAYAQUIL WHERE ACTING PORT DIRECTOR, COMMANDER SAAVEDRA OFFERED AN EXPLANATION OF THE EXPANSION PLANS, A TOUR OF THE PORT FACILITIES AND WAREHOUSES, AND A BOAT TOUR PAST THE AREA WHERE EXPANSION WILL TAKE PLACE. ABEER BEARD OF PALMER AND BAKER, THE U.S. FIRM DOING THE ENGINEERING STUDIES FOR THE PORT EXPANSION, ACCOMPANIED THE GROUP ON THIS VISIT.

3. THE GROUP LATER VISITED MOLINOS DEL ECUADOR (U.S.

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FLOUR MILL). GENERAL MANAGER WILLIAM BLACK GAVE A BRIEF

HISTORY OF THE MILL--THE LARGEST IN ECUADOR--PROBLEMS IT HAD ENCOUNTERED AS A FOREIGN-OWNED MILL, AND THE PROJECTS IT HAD INITIATED TO INVOLVE IT IN ECUADOR'S SOCIAL PROGRAMS.

4. THE FIRST DAY WAS ENDED WITH A U.S. BUSINESSMEN'S MEETING AT THE CONSUL GENERAL'S RESIDENCE. THE BUSINESSMEN REPORTED ON PROJECTS IN GUAYAQUIL OF INTEREST TO THEM SUCH AS BANANAS, AND SUGAR, SUGAR CANE, FOR EXAMPLE, APPEARS TO BE REPLACING BANANAS ON MARGINAL LAND. THE GOE TREND OF PARTICIPATING IN PRIVATE ENTERPRISE THROUGH DIRECT TAKE-OVERS OR JOINT VENTURES WAS DISCUSSED.

5. ON THE MORNING OF AUG. 20, THE GROUP VISITED CENTRO DE DESARROLLO INDUSTRIAL DEL ECUADOR, (CENDES, CENTER FOR ECUADOREAN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT). CENDES OFFICIALS, LED BY GUAYAQUIL DIRECTOR NELSON RAMOS, EXPLAINED THEIR PROJECTS IN GUAYAQUIL, GUAYAS, AND COASTAL AREAS, CONSISTING OF METALWORKING, CHEMICALS (ESPECIALLY A PROJECT TO PRODUCE SALICYLIC ACID), AND DEHYDRATED ONIONS AND GARLIC. DIRECTOR RAMOS ASKED THE AMBASSADOR IF THE EMBASSY COULD ASSIST. CENDES IN CONTACTING U.S. FIRMS WHICH WOULD INVEST OR GO INTO A JOINT VENTURE IN THEIR PROJECTS. THE PROBLEM, CENDES EXPLAINED, IS THAT IT HAS THE FEASIBILITY STUDIES, MARKET RESEARCH, AND ECUADOREAN INVESTORS, BUT OTHERS, WITH CAPITAL AND KNOW-HOW, MUST TAKE THE STEP OF MAKING ITS PROJECTS A REALITY. THE AMBASSADOR SAID EMBASSY WOULD ASSIST. WE HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY INFORMED RAMOS OF THE AVAILABILITY OF THE TOP PROGRAM FOR PUBLICIZING INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

6. THE CTF MEETING WAS HELD IN THE CONSULATE GENERAL CONFERENCE ROOM. THE ASST. COMATT INFORMED THE GROUP THAT THE CHAMBER OF CONSTRUCTION HAD ASKED THE EMBASSY'S ASSISTANCE IN MAKING THEIR FIRST NATIONAL EXPOSITION ON CONSTRUCTION A SUCCESS. WE HAD OFFERED TO ASSIST BY HAVING USIS TRY TO BRING THEIR SPACE EXHIBIT IN TIME FOR THE OPENING, THE COMMERCIAL SECTION WOULD HAVE A CATALOG EXHIBIT, AND USIS WOULD SHOW APPROPRIATE FILMS ON A CONTINUOUS BASIS. THE TOP FILM WAS SHOWN AND THE ARTHUR D. UNCLASSIFIED

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LITTLE PRELIMINARY REPORT WAS DISCUSSED. MINUTES OF THE MEETING SENT BY POUCH.

7. COMISION DE ESTUDIOS PARA EL DESARROLLO DE LA CUENCA DEL RIO GUAYAS (CEDEGE, CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT OF GUAYAS RIVER BASIN) WAS NEXT ON THE SCHEDULE. STAFF HEADED BY ING. OSCAR LOOR, PRESENTED A PROGRAM WITH DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ALL OF ITS ONGOING PROJECTS, MAINLY FOR

IRRIGATION AND WATER CONTROL IN THE GUAYAS RIVER BASIN.

8. THE TWO-DAY TRIP ENDED WITH A LUNCHEON HOSTED BY CONSUL GENERAL WITH GUAYAQUIL BUSINESS LEADERS.

9. COMMENT. INASMUCH AS GUAYAQUIL IS ECUADOR'S LARGEST CITY AND REMAINS ITS MOST IMPORTANT COMMERCIAL CENTER, THE VISIT WAS NOT ONLY APPROPRIATE BUT HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL. MANY OF THE CTF MEMBERS ARE NEW TO ECUADOR AND HENCE HAVE DISCERNED EARLY ON THAT THE COUNTRY DOES NOT BEGIN AND END WITH QUITO. MOREOVER, THE AMERICAN AND GUAYAQUIL BUSINESSMEN WITH WHOM WE MET WERE HIGHLY GRATIFIED BY THIS SHOW OF INTEREST.
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